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ABSTRACT

In spring 1980, a follow-up study was conducted of all students who entered Maryland community colleges for the first time in fall 1976. Questionnaires were sent to 26,829 students soliciting information on educational objectives and goal achievement, full- or part-time attendance, satisfaction with instruction and overall quality, reasons for leaving the community college, employment, and transfer experiences. Selected findings, based on a 47% response rate, include the following: (1) 81% of those who had enrolled in occupational programs were employed at the time of the survey; (2) 70% of those whose primary reason for attending a community college was to prepare for transfer had achieved that goal; (3) 94% expressed satisfaction with their program, and 96% were satisfied with the college attended; (4) 32% of the respondents reported that their primary reason for attending the college was to prepare for transfer, 32% to enter a career or update job skills, 18% for self-interest and enrichment, and 15% to explore a new area; (5) 35% of those entering with the goal of obtaining an associate in arts degree had received the degree within 3.5 years; (6) the primary reasons that non-graduates gave for not returning to college were that they had achieved their academic goal or had transferred before graduation; and (7) 62% of the respondents reported that they had attained the goal for which they had attended college. The questionnaire is appended. (Author/HB)

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Four Years Later

Follow-up of 1976 Entrants Maryland Community Colleges

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STUDENT FOLLOW-UP OF 1976 ENTRANTS

MARYLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

May, 1981

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STUDENT FOLLOW-UP OF 1976 ENTRANTS

MARYLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Abstract

Maryland's community colleges conduct extensive follow-up studies of their students to help evaluate college instructional programs. These studies are also used to evaluate the extent to which the colleges assist students in achieving their educational goals, their career development, their opportunities for employment, and their preparation for transfer. Past studies have included follow-up surveys of graduates and their employers, students who entered a community college but who did not necessarily graduate, and the transfer success of students at four-year public colleges.

This study reports the Statewide results of a survey of all students entering Maryland community colleges for the first time in Fall, 1976. Questionnaires were mailed three and one-half years later in Spring 1980 to 26,829 students. The adjusted Statewide response rate was 47 percent. Analyses for each school have been conducted and are available at each campus for faculty and others interested in the follow-up results. The results of the Statewide data analyses are examined in this report and compared with responses from past surveys where appropriate.

The major Statewide findings included: (a) 70 percent of those whose primary reason for attending a community college was to prepare for transfer had achieved that goal between 1976 and 1980; (b) 81 percent of the students who had enrolled in occupational programs were employed three and one-half years later; (c) 94 percent expressed satisfaction with their program; and (d) 96 percent expressed satisfaction with the community college. Thirty-two percent of the students reported that their primary reason for attending the college was to prepare for transfer to a senior college or university. An equal proportion (32 percent) reported that their primary reason for attending the college had been to prepare for immediate entry into a career or to update skills for a job. The remaining students reported that their primary reason for attendance was for self-interest and enrichment (18 percent), to explore a new area (15 percent), or "other" (3 percent). The primary reasons that nongraduates gave for not returning to the college were that they had achieved their academic goal or that they had transferred before graduation. Thirty-five percent of the entrants with an AA goal had received a degree within three and one-half years. Achievement of this AA goal was down 13 percent from the 1974 entrants study. A larger number of students transferred to four-year institutions before they graduated from their community college.

PREFACE

This report presents the results and implications of the sixth Statewide student follow-up study, a joint project of the State Board for Community Colleges and the Maryland Community College Research Group. The report summarizes the results of a 1980 survey of students who entered community college for the first time in Fall, 1976. The present study of entrants was a replication of earlier studies of entrants in 1970, 1971, 1972, and 1974 (Hurley, 1974; Hurley 1975; Tschechtelin, 1976; Tschechtelin, 1980). The current report includes comparisons with the 1974 entrant study where appropriate.

The study could not have been completed without the cooperation and assistance of the follow-up study coordinators of each community college. Their help with the research design and data collection is gratefully acknowledged. Participation by the State Board for Community Colleges is supported in part by a grant from the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Vocational-Technical Education. Gerry Strauss of the State Board staff prepared the manuscript.

BRENT M. JOHNSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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STUDENT FOLLOW-UP OF 1976 ENTRANTS

MARYLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

PURPOSE

In 1980 a survey was conducted of 1976 first-time entrants to Maryland community colleges. The survey provides data for the Program Data Monitoring System, the Vocational Education Data System (VEDS), analyses and studies at each college, and for reports, such as this, analyzing Statewide results. These studies help Maryland community colleges to understand the goals and aspirations of their students and to evaluate the extent to which the community colleges assisted students in achieving their goals.

PROBLEM

While Statewide student follow-up studies have been conducted in Maryland since 1971, it is important to have current information about why students came to the community colleges, how they evaluated their programs and colleges, and what they did with their community college education.

The employment rate, rate of employment in field of training, transfer rate, and level of student satisfaction provided by the survey data, are important elements in the annual program evaluation system developed by the State Board for Community Colleges (SBCC) and since 1976 have been required by the Vocational Education Data System.

In addition to these uses of the data, the discussion and reports generated by the Statewide and campus studies of the survey are important at a time when the community colleges are admitting more nontraditional students with new goals. The personal ways students use colleges to accomplish their individual goals are changing and colleges must be aware of changing student needs.

METHOD

Study Population

The study population was defined as all persons who were first-time degree credit students in a Maryland community college during Fall, 1976. This population of 26,829 students included students who had been in occupational, transfer, and undeclared programs. Part-time and full-time students, graduates and non-graduates were all surveyed three and one-half years later in Spring, 1980. All seventeen Maryland public community colleges participated.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was developed by the Maryland Community College Research Group and included questions on goals and goal achievement, employment, transfer, and student satisfaction. The questionnaire is shown in Appendix A.

In addition to the responses to the questionnaires, the following information was supplied directly from college records: program at exit from the community college, credit hours earned, highest degree earned, overall grade point average, current enrollment status, sex, year of birth, and race. Two colleges were found to have supplied incorrect data for the variable highest degree earned and students from these colleges were eliminated from all analyses of this variable.

Procedure

The SBCC distributed the questionnaires to the colleges for mailing. Each college used student records to develop a master list of its study population. This master list was used to keep track of the packets returned as undeliverable by the Postal Service. The first packets were mailed in March, 1980 and consisted of a cover letter from the college, the questionnaire, and a preaddressed, prepaid return envelope. At two-week intervals, a second and third mailing were made to nonrespondents.

Each college coordinator forwarded the completed questionnaires, including the demographic information supplied from the college file, to the SBCC. The data were keypunched and verified at the University of Maryland Computer Science Center. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Stienbrenner, and Bent, 1976) was used for the statistical analyses. Each community college was provided the results for their college, Statewide aggregate results, and the original questionnaires. Student identifiers were not punched and no personally identifiable student records are maintained by the SBCC.

Return Rate

Among the 26,829 persons in the study population, 9,150 returned usable questionnaires for an unadjusted return rate of 34 percent. However, 7,388 questionnaires were returned as undeliverable by the Postal Service, producing a response rate of 47 percent among those receiving the questionnaire.

In an earlier study of 1972 entrants, telephone follow-ups of nonrespondents found that nonrespondents were significantly less interested in transfer goals, less likely to have transferred, more likely to be employed, and more likely to recommend their program of study. Respondents in the 1976 entrant study are also likely to differ from nonrespondents on these critical variables and it is not wise to generalize to the entire population of entering students for these variables.

RESULTS

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table I shows the characteristics of the respondents for the 1974 and 1976 entrant surveys. The typical 1976 entrant respondent was white, female, and 26 years old. There were few differences between the 1976 respondents and those of the 1974 entrant study. The 1976 respondents, reflecting changing enrollment patterns, were more likely to have been in a career program and to have completed fewer credit hours than the students who had entered in 1974.

STATUS OF STUDENTS

Figure I summarizes the status of the students three and one-half years after first entering the community college. For the 1976 entrants, 55 percent were employed and another 22 percent were employed while attending a transfer college. Approximately 32 percent had transferred. These proportions were similar to those found for the 1974 entrants which are shown in parentheses in Figure I.

The proportion of students who had received their degree before transferring declined from the study of 1974 entrants. Among those who transferred in the 1976 study, only 27 percent had received an AA degree. Among those who transferred in the 1974 study, 34 percent had received an AA degree. The proportion of students who were "transfer only students" and who had received an AA degree declined from 45 percent to 28 percent.

A special analysis of the 1976 entrants was conducted to determine the characteristics of those students who had transferred before graduation and how these students might differ from those who had graduated before transferring. Students who transferred before graduation were more likely to have been part-time students at the community college, were somewhat older, and were less likely to have had a grade point average of 3.0 or better.

Table I

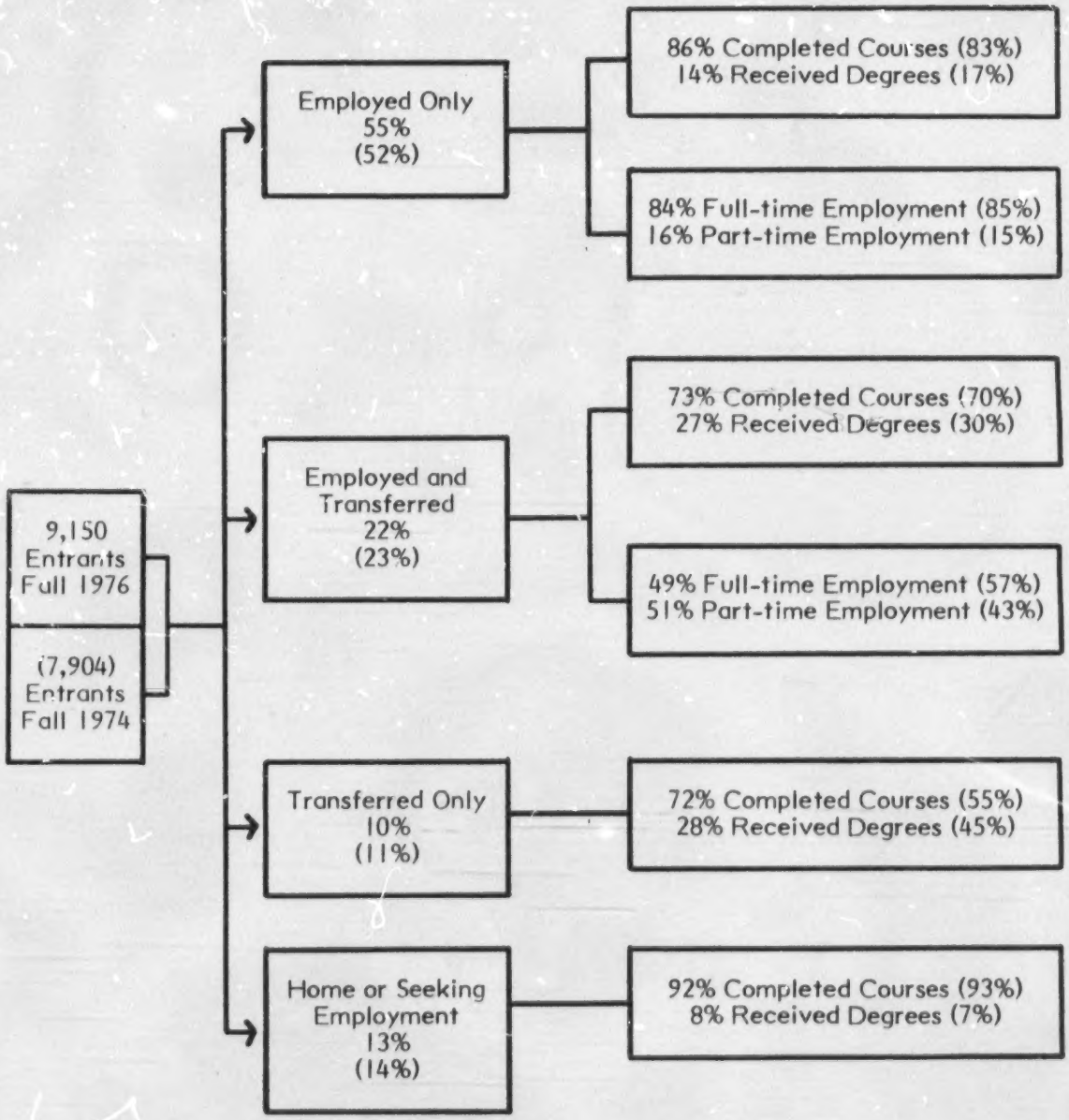
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

	1974[1]		1976	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Program Type				
Transfer	3,530	46	3,819	42
Career	2,875	37	3,657	40
Undeclared	1,295	17	1,620	18
Highest Degree Earned				
AA	1,670	22	1,541	19
Certificate	83	1	101	1
None	5,962	77	6,592	80
Sex				
Male	3,228	41	3,637	40
Female	4,627	59	5,480	60
Race				
Minority	1,146	15	1,122	13
White	6,395	85	7,220	87
Attendance Status				
Part-time	4,216	55	4,925	55
Full-time	3,392	45	3,995	45
Mean Credits Earned	31.3		29.9	
Cumulative Grade Point Average	2.7		2.6	
Mean Age	26.2		25.7	

[1] Analyses of students entering Maryland community colleges in 1972 and 1974 and of students graduating in 1978 are reported in Tschechtelin, James D. and MacLean, Abby D. "Student Follow-up of Entrants and Graduates, Maryland Community Colleges," Maryland State Board for Community Colleges, Nov. 1980.

Figure 1

STATUS OF ENTRANTS THREE AND ONE-HALF YEARS LATER


9,150 Entrants Fall 1976
(7,904) Entrants Fall 1974
Employed Only 55% (52%)
Employed and Transferred 22% (23%)
Transferred Only 10% (11%)
Home or Seeking Employment 13% (14%)
86% Completed Courses (83%)
14% Received Degrees (17%)
84% Full-time Employment (85%)
16% Part-time Employment (15%)
73% Completed Courses (70%)
27% Received Degrees (30%)
49% Full-time Employment (57%)
51% Part-time Employment (43%)
72% Completed Courses (55%)
28% Received Degrees (45%)
92% Completed Courses (93%)
8% Received Degrees (7%)

NOTE: The percentages of students in these categories for 1974 are in parentheses.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Thirty-two percent of the 1976 entrants said that their primary reason for attending a community college had been to prepare for transfer to a four-year institution (Table 2).

A large number of students were also at the community college because their primary interest was immediate entry into a career (20 percent); personal interest and self-enrichment (18 percent); exploring a new career or academic area (15 percent); and updating skills for a job currently held (12 percent).

The reasons for attending the community college remained similar to the reasons given by the 1974 entrant respondents.

Table 2

EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF STUDENTS

Primary Goal	1974 Number	1974 Percent	1976 Number	1976 Percent
Prepare for transfer to a four-year college	2,346	32	2,731	32
Prepare for immediate entry into a career	1,362	18	1,729	20
Interest and self-enrichment	1,378	19	1,538	18
Explore new career or new academic areas	1,045	14	1,338	15
Update skills for a job currently held	971	13	1,059	12
Other goals	243	3	271	3
	7,345	100	8,666	100

What proportion of the students achieved their goals?

Sixty-two percent of the 1976 entrants reported that they had achieved their goal (Table 3). This rate of goal achievement was quite similar to that found for the 1974 entrants. Differences in goal achievement between males and females, found to be significant among the 1974 entrants, were not significant in 1976. In 1976 there were still significant differences in goal achievement between minority and white students.

Among the 1976 entrants goal achievement was high in both career (58 percent) and transfer (65 percent) programs. Occupational programs with particularly high rates of goal achievement were Real Estate and programs in the Allied Health area, such as Dental Lab Technician, Radiological Technology, Nursing, Dental Assistant, and Medical Assistant.

Table 3

SELF-REPORTED GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

	1974		1976	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	3,555	63	4,540	62
Sex				
Male	1,398*	60	1,953	61
Female	2,138*	65	2,578	63
Race				
Minority	313*	50	397*	47
White	2,961*	64	3,730*	64

* Differences identified as significant in this and subsequent tables were tested using a .01 level.

What was the graduation rate among those entrants whose goal was an associate in arts degree?

Fifty-five percent of the 1976 entrants had entered the college planning to obtain an AA degree. Nine percent had been planning to achieve a certificate and thirty-six percent had not entered with a degree goal but were interested only in courses.

Thirty-five percent of the entrants with an AA goal received a degree within three and one-half years. This percentage is down from 43 percent for the 1974 entrants. Students who had changed their goal (4 percent) or who were currently enrolled at the college (15 percent) were not included in the analysis.

Differences in achievement of an AA goal were not found between respondents in career and transfer programs. Significant differences in the achievement of this goal were found between minority and white students and between males and females. Female students were more likely to have achieved this goal than males, and white students were more likely to have achieved this goal than minority students (Table 4).

Table 4

DEGREE ACHIEVEMENT AMONG STUDENTS WHOSE GOAL WAS A COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEGREE

	1974		1976	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	1,370	43	1,043	35
Sex				
Male	555	41	377*	31
Female	815	45	644*	39
Race				
Minority	113*	26	81*	21
White	1,135*	45	848*	36
Program Type				
Transfer	670	45	454	35
Career	671	46	548	38

What was the graduation rate among all entrants?

Twenty percent of the total sample of 1976 entrants had received a degree within three and one-half years after entrance to the community college. One percent had received a certificate and 19 percent had received an AA degree. The graduation rate for all entrants was thus lower than the rate among those with an AA goal. Twenty-two percent of the 1974 entrants had received an AA degree within three and one-half years.

What proportion of the students were still enrolled?

Fifteen percent of the 1976 entrants were still enrolled at their community college three and one-half years after entering the college. Students who were reported as still enrolled had not necessarily been enrolled continuously since 1976. Some may have left the college for a period and then re-entered. Some have graduated and are presently enrolled for further individual courses to update skills. Seventeen percent of the 1974 entrants had still been enrolled three and one-half years after entering college.

Why did the students discontinue attendance at the college?

Among nongraduates, the five reasons given most often as the primary ones for discontinuing attendance had not changed from the study of 1974 entrants (Table 5). The most frequent reasons for discontinuing attendance before graduating were: achieved educational goal (19 percent); transferred to another college (16 percent); scheduling conflict between job and studies (15 percent); personal/marriage reasons (10 percent); or accepted a job (10 percent). The following reasons were given by one percent or less of both the 1974 and 1976 entrants: low grades; course work not challenging; courses too difficult; applied, but could not obtain financial aid; this college too expensive; child care too costly; went into military service.

Table 5

PRIMARY REASON FOR NOT RETURNING TO COLLEGE

Reason	1974 Percent	1976 Percent
Achieved educational goal	16	19
Transferred	15	16
Scheduling conflict between job and studies	14	15
Personal/Marriage	13	10
Accepted a job	9	10
Program or courses not available	8	8
Unsure about choice of major	5	5
Changed educational goal	4	4
Dissatisfaction with program	3	3
Dissatisfied with quality of teaching	2	3
Financial aid was not sufficient	2	2
Low grades	1	1
Course work not challenging	1	1
Found courses too difficult	1	1
Applied, but could not obtain financial aid	1	1
This college was too expensive	1	1
Child care too costly	1	1
Went into military service	1	1

Note: Only nongraduates are included.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

What proportion of the respondents were employed full-time? Part-time?

Eighty-three percent of the respondents were employed; 61 percent were employed full-time; and 22 percent were employed part-time (Table 6).

Among the students who were employed full-time, 49 percent held the same job they held prior to or while attending college. Fifty-one percent had obtained their first job or a new job since leaving the college.

Table 6

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

	1974		1976	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	5,962	75	7,047	83
Full-time	4,524	57	5,182	61
Part-time	1,438	18	1,865	22

What proportion of the students whose goal had been career development were employed full-time?

Seventy-four percent of the students whose goal had been career development were employed full-time (Table 7). Male students were more likely to have achieved full-time employment when their goal was career development. No significant differences in employment goal achievement were found by race.

Table 7

FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT AMONG STUDENTS WHOSE GOAL WAS CAREER DEVELOPMENT

	1974		1976	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	1,405	79	1,932	74
Sex				
Male	590*	86	750*	82
Female	807*	74	1,182*	69
Race				
Minority	229	78	268	69
White	1,047	78	1,592	75

What proportion of the respondents held full time jobs in their field of training?

Forty-seven percent of all the students who had been in an occupational program were working in jobs which were related to their community college program (Table 8). The highest rates of relationship between job and training were Fire Science Technology (83 percent), Dental Hygiene (80 percent), Mechanical Technology (61 percent), Business Technology (60 percent), and Construction Technology (60 percent). Programs with the least relationship between job and training were Recreation Technology (21 percent), Photography (25 percent), Communications (25 percent), and Applied Arts (25 percent).

Students who had graduated from occupational programs were more likely to be working full-time in related jobs than the students who had not graduated.

Table 8

PROPORTION OF 1976 ENTRANTS EMPLOYED FULL-TIME IN FIELD OF TRAINING

Program Number	Program Title	Number of Respondents	Percent Employed Full-time in Field of Training
5001-01	General Business	220	58
5002-01	Accounting	375	51
5004-01	Business Management	104	60
5004-06	Real Estate	80	43
5004-08	Retail Management	79	52
5005-01	Secretarial Science	392	59
5007-01	Photography	32	25
5008-01	Communications	56	25
5010-01	Hotel-Motel Management	26	42
5010-02	Restaurant-Club Management	24	50
5012-05	Applied Arts	68	25
5101-01	Data Processing	271	49
5103-01	Computer Programing	130	46
5104-01	Computer Operator	24	33
5202-01	Dental Assisting	38	50
5203-01	Dental Hygiene	25	80
5205-01	Medical Lab Technology	38	39
5207-01	Radiologic Technology	33	52
5208-01	Nursing	347	39
5214-01	Medical Assistant	25	48
5216-01	Mental Health/Human Services	78	32
5301-01	General Engineering Technology	22	50
5304-01	Drafting	40	38
5310-01	Electrical Technology	116	51
5315-01	Mechanical Technology	23	61
5317-01	Construction Technology	20	60
5403-02	Wildlife Management	29	28
5503-01	Early Childhood	81	38
5303-03	Child Care	30	30
5505-01	Law Enforcement	274	46
5506-01	Recreation Technology	84	21
5507-01	Fire Science Technology	41	83
Statewide, All Career Programs		3,657	47

Note: Only programs with 20 or more respondents are shown.

Where were the full-time respondents employed?

Fifty-four percent of the students who were employed full-time were employed in the same county as their community college. Twenty-nine percent were employed in some other Maryland location, and 18 percent were employed out-of-state (Table 9).

Table 9

EMPLOYMENT LOCATION OF 1976 ENTRANTS

Location	Number	Percent
Same county/city as community college	2,722	54
Other Maryland county	840	17
Baltimore City*	627	12
Washington, D.C.	447	9
Delaware	23	1
Pennsylvania	58	1
Virginia	104	2
West Virginia	24	1
Other State	206	4

* Exclusive of Community College of Baltimore respondents employed in Baltimore City.

Did the community college program provide employment assistance?

Students who were employed full-time were asked if their educational program had assisted in: increasing the theoretical understanding required in their jobs; increasing their abilities to perform skills required by their jobs; obtaining a job; or obtaining salary increases and/or promotions. Table 10 shows the number and proportion of respondents who reported that their career program had assisted in these areas of career development. Large proportions felt that the program had increased their understanding and skills. Smaller proportions reported that their community college experience had assisted in obtaining a job or in obtaining a salary increase or promotion.

Table 10

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY CAREER PROGRAMS

Type of Assistance	Number	Percent
Increased theoretical understanding	1,352	87
Increased job skills	1,320	83
Helped to obtain job	731	48
Helped to obtain salary increase and/or promotion	581	42

TRANSFER

What proportion of the respondents whose goal was to transfer achieved their goal?

Among students whose goal was to transfer, 70 percent had transferred (Table 11). There were no significant differences in the rate of transfer goal achievement by sex. Minorities, however, achieved transfer goals at a significantly lower rate than white students. The rate of transfer goal achievement increased from 1972 (68 percent) to 1974 (76 percent) and has now fallen back toward the 1972 percent.

Table 11

TRANSFER AMONG STUDENTS WHOSE GOAL WAS TRANSFER

	1974		1976	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	1,375	76	1,903	70
Sex				
Male	693	76	944	73
Female	680	76	924	69
Race				
Minority	93*	59	177*	58
White	1,200*	78	1,604*	72

Note: In this study, "transfer" refers to any work at another college or university after leaving the community college.

What proportion of all students transferred?

Among all of the respondents (regardless of their goal), 33 percent transferred (Table 12). The majority of those who transferred did so on a full-time basis. The transfer rate was down slightly from the 1972 and 1974 studies when 38 and 35 percent of the respondents had transferred. This decline in transfer rates reflects a shift in enrollment to career programs at Maryland Community Colleges.

Table 12

RESPONDENTS WHO TRANSFERRED

	Number	Percent
TOTAL	2,978	33
Status of Students at Transfer Institution		
Full-time	2,249	76
Part-time	689	24

To what colleges did the students transfer?

Seventy-two percent of the 1976 entrants who transferred went to a Maryland institution (Table 13). Twenty-nine percent went to the University of Maryland and 23 percent to a public State college in Maryland. These proportions are slightly smaller than those found in the studies of the 1972 and 1974 entrants. Thirty-one percent of the 1972 transfers had gone to the University of Maryland and 26 percent had gone to a public State college. Among the 1974 entrants 30 percent had gone to the University of Maryland and 25 percent had transferred to a public State college.

Table 13

TRANSFER INSTITUTION OF THE STUDENTS

Institution	1972 Percent	1974 Percent	1976 Percent
Maryland			
University of Maryland	31	30	29
Public State College	26	25	23
Private four-year	8	7	7
Other Community College	7	9	9
Technical/commercial	2	2	3
Private two-year	-	-	1
TOTAL MARYLAND	74	73	72
Non-Maryland			
Public four-year	13	12	12
Private four-year	10	10	10
Others	4	4	6
TOTAL NON-MARYLAND	27	26	28
TOTAL NUMBER OF TRANSFERS	2,100	2,008	3,008

For what proportion of the respondents was their community college program related to their major at the transfer school?

Most of the students who transferred reported that their community college program was directly or somewhat related to their major at the transfer school (Table 14). Seventeen percent reported that it was not related. These proportions are similar to those found in the studies of the 1974 entrants and of the 1972 entrants.

Table 14

RELATIONSHIP OF RESPONDENTS' COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAMS TO THEIR TRANSFER MAJOR

Relationship	1972 Percent	1974 Percent	1976 Percent
Directly related	48	49	49
Somewhat related	35	34	34
Not related	16	16	17

How many credits did the respondents lose in the transfer process?

Thirty-three percent of the transfer students reported that they had lost four or more credit hours in the transfer process (Table 15). This proportion was higher than in the previous survey of 1974 entrants when 28 percent reported losing four or more credit hours. In the survey of 1972 entrants 27 percent reported losing four or more credit hours.

What was the grade point average of students at their transfer institution?

Fifty-six percent of the students who transferred earned a grade point average of 3.0 or higher at the transfer institution (Table 15). Three percent reported failing grades (below 2.0). These grades are similar to those reported in the studies of the 1972 and 1974 entrants. They are also similar to the grade distribution of all students at the University of Maryland College Park and other public four-year colleges.

How satisfied were the respondents with their preparation for transfer?

Ninety-one percent of the transfer students reported that they were extremely satisfied or satisfied with their preparation for transfer (Table 15). This high level of satisfaction was also found in the 1972 and 1974 studies of entrants.

Table 15

SUCCESS OF RESPONDENTS IN TRANSFER INSTITUTIONS

Credits Lost	1972 Percent	1974 Percent	1976 Percent
None	53	53	50
1 - 3	20	19	18
4 - 6	12	12	14
7 - 12	8	9	10
13 - 20	4	4	5
21 or more	3	3	4
Grade Point Average			
Below 2.0	3	3	3
2.0 - 2.4	14	11	13
2.5 - 2.9	30	28	28
3.0 - 3.4	35	35	34
Above 3.5	18	23	22
Satisfaction with Preparation			
Extremely satisfied	30	33	31
Satisfied	61	55	58
Unsatisfied	9	12	11

EVALUATION OF PROGRAM AND COLLEGE

How satisfied were these students with the quality of classroom instruction in their program?

Ninety-four percent of the 1976 entrants were extremely satisfied or satisfied with the quality of classroom instruction in their program (Table 16).

Satisfaction with the quality of instruction was examined in transfer and occupational programs and among those who had and had not received a degree. A similar proportion of transfer and career program students were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the instruction. The proportions of students which were unsatisfied were small both for those who had received degrees and those who had not received a degree.

How satisfied were these students with the overall quality of their community college?

Satisfaction with the overall quality of the community college was also high, with 96 percent satisfied or extremely satisfied (Table 16).

Table 16

COMMUNITY COLLEGE EVALUATION

Variable	Percent
Quality of Instruction	
Extremely satisfied	32
Satisfied	62
Unsatisfied	6
Overall Quality of College	
Extremely satisfied	33
Satisfied	63
Unsatisfied	4

SUMMARY

This study is a part of a continuing effort to follow up students in Maryland community colleges. The primary purpose of these studies is to help the community colleges evaluate the extent to which they assist their students in achieving their educational goals, their career development, and their preparation for transfer to other colleges and universities. The studies also provide data for the Program Data Monitoring System and the Vocational Education Data Systems (VEDS). The studies allow comparison across colleges and between programs, and allow examination of differences among groups of students in the colleges. Similar questions have been asked in studies of the entering classes of 1972 and 1974. The ongoing research is a joint project of the State Board for Community Colleges and the Maryland Community College Research Group.

This report examines the responses of students who entered in Fall, 1976 and were surveyed three and one-half years later in Spring, 1980. The response rate among those who received the questionnaire was 47 percent. Where appropriate, these responses were compared to those of the earlier surveys.

Research questions were directed toward five areas: student educational goals, goal achievement, career development, transfer, and satisfaction with the instructional and overall quality of the college.

Student Goals

Thirty-two percent of the students reported that their primary reason for attending the college was to prepare for transfer to a senior college or university. An equal proportion (32 percent) reported that their primary reason for attending the college had been to prepare for immediate entry into a career or to update skills for a job. The remaining students reported that their primary reason for attendance was for self-interest and enrichment (18 percent), to explore a new area (15 percent), or "other" (3 percent). Sixty-three percent of the entrants reported that they achieved their community college goals. Minority students reported achieving their goals at a significantly lower rate than white students. Differences between males and females in goal achievement, found in the survey of 1974 entrants, were not found in the 1976 entrants.

Twenty percent of all 1976 entrants had received a degree within three and one-half years. Thirty-five percent of the entrants whose goal was an associate in arts had earned the degree. Fifteen percent of the 1976 entrants were still enrolled at the community college three and one-half years later.

Career Development

Eighty-three percent of the respondents were employed. Only 7 percent were seeking work. Forty-seven percent of the students were employed full-time in jobs that were related to their community college program. One-half of the respondents who were employed full-time were employed in the same county as their community college and 92 percent were employed in Maryland. Students in career programs reported that their education had been most helpful in increasing their theoretical understanding and in increasing their job skills.

Transfer

Seventy percent of the students whose goal had been transfer had transferred to another institution. Among all respondents, regardless of their goal, 33 percent transferred. Most of the transfers were full-time students at the receiving institution and 72 percent of these students went to a Maryland institution.

Eighty-four percent of those who transferred reported that their community college program was related to their subsequent major. Thirty-three percent of the transfer students reported they had lost four or more credit hours in the transfer process but only 3 percent reported grades below 2.0 at the transfer institution. Ninety-one percent reported that they were satisfied with their community college preparation for transfer.

Student Satisfaction

Students were satisfied with the instruction in their program and with the overall quality of their community college.

IMPLICATIONS

Perceptions of the Community College

This study and other Maryland community college student follow-up studies have shown that more and more community college students are coming to college for reasons other than a degree. Other reasons include upgrading job skills, self-enrichment and career development. These students are likely to be older, more likely to be part-time students and more likely to be in career-oriented curricula than previous students.

Despite these changes in the students and changes to accommodate these students in the colleges, there are still tendencies to view community colleges as simply half of a four-year college. These perceptions are manifested in federal financial assistance programs that are often unavailable to the part-time students at community colleges. They are also manifested in the use of first-time/full-time "freshmen" as a leading indicator of future enrollments at the college and the tendency to project a constant proportion of community college students transferring to the four-year colleges.

Racial Differences in Student Success.

Among community college students, minority students had a significantly lower rate of degree and transfer goal achievement. No racial differences in employment goal achievement were detected. These results were similar to those found in earlier studies of community college entrants. However, both minority and white students who persisted to graduation were more likely to report goal achievement in transferring. The higher goal achievement among minority students who have graduated should encourage each college to continue its efforts to assist minority students to persist to graduation.

The Transfer Process

Students whose goal was to transfer to a four-year college are still achieving that goal at a high rate. However, a smaller proportion of these students were obtaining an AA degree before transferring. A larger proportion reported that four or more credits were lost in the transfer process. The reasons for the loss of credits and the tendency to transfer before graduation need to be investigated further.

The proportion of community college students reporting that they had transferred has declined from 39 to 33 percent from 1972 to 1976. There are implications of this proportional decline for four-year colleges that have experienced an absolute decline in enrollment. This factor should be taken into account in future enrollment projections for four-year colleges.

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APPENDIX A

MARYLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGES
STUDENT FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE
FIRST-TIME STUDENTS, FALL 1976

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help your community college and the State Board for Community Colleges assess and improve their programs. Please complete it promptly (even if you took only one or two courses) and return in the envelope provided. All answers will be strictly confidential. Thank you for your assistance.

A. Please check what you hoped to achieve at this community college.

37
- ☐ 1. Take courses without working toward a degree or certificate
- ☐ 2. Certificate
- ☐ 3. Associate degree

B. Please check the one statement which most closely corresponds to your primary reason for attending this college.

- ☐ 1. Exploration of new career or academic areas
- ☐ 2. Preparation for immediate entry into a career

38
- ☐ 3. Preparation for transfer to a four-year institution
- ☐ 4. Update skills for a job currently held
- ☐ 5. Interest and self-enrichment
- ☐ 6. Other (specify) _____

C. Was your goal (indicated in Item B) achieved by the time you left this community college?

- ☐ 1. Yes

39
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Still attending this community college

D. Did you attend this community college primarily on a part-time or full-time basis?

40
- ☐ 1. Part-time (11 credits or less per term)
- ☐ 2. Full-time (12 credits or more per term)

E. How satisfied were you with the quality of classroom instruction in your program of study? (check one)

- ☐ 1. Extremely satisfied

41
- ☐ 2. Satisfied
- ☐ 3. Unsatisfied

F. How satisfied were you with the overall quality of this community college? (check one)

- ☐ 1. Extremely satisfied

42
- ☐ 2. Satisfied
- ☐ 3. Unsatisfied

G. Please respond to this item if you are no longer a student at this college.
Listed below are some academic, employment, financial, and personal reasons why a student might leave college. To what extent were these *your* reasons for leaving this college? (Check as many as apply.)

43 ☐ a. Achieved educational goal
44 ☐ b. Changed educational goal
45 ☐ c. Scheduling conflict between job and studies
46 ☐ d. Accepted a job
47 ☐ e. Went into military service
48 ☐ f. Program or courses not available at this college
49 ☐ g. Dissatisfaction with program
50 ☐ h. Unsure about my choice of major
51 ☐ i. Course work not challenging
52 ☐ j. Low grades
53 ☐ k. Found courses too difficult
54 ☐ l. Dissatisfied with quality of teaching
55 ☐ m. Transferred
56 ☐ n. Applied, but could not obtain financial aid
57 ☐ o. Financial aid was not sufficient
58 ☐ p. Child care too costly
59 ☐ q. This college was too expensive
60 ☐ r. Personal/marriage

H. If you are no longer a student at this college, look at the above list and select the three most important reasons why you did not return to this college. (List, in order of importance, the appropriate letter [a, b, c, etc.] in the boxes below.)

61 First ☐
62 Second ☐
63 Third ☐

OVER

EMPLOYMENT

Check one answer for each question.

I. Your current employment status.

☐ 1. Employed part-time
64 ☐ 2. Employed full-time
☐ 3. Unemployed and seeking a job
☐ 4. Unemployed and not seeking a job

If you are currently unemployed, skip to item N.

J. Did you hold this same job while attending the community college?

☐ 1. Yes
65 ☐ 2. No

K. Geographic location in which you are presently employed.

☐ 1. Same county/city as this community college
☐ 2. Other county in Maryland
☐ 3. Baltimore City
☐ 4. Washington, D.C.
66 ☐ 5. Delaware
☐ 6. Pennsylvania
☐ 7. Virginia
☐ 8. West Virginia
☐ 9. Other state

L. Relationship between your program at this community college and your job.

☐ 1. Program directly related to job
67 ☐ 2. Program somewhat related to job
☐ 3. Program not at all related to job

M. Did your educational program at this community college assist you in:
Increasing your theoretical understanding required for your job?

☐ 1. Yes
68 ☐ 2. No
☐ 3. Not applicable

Increasing your abilities to perform skills required by your job?

☐ 1. Yes
69 ☐ 2. No
☐ 3. Not applicable

Obtaining your job?

☐ 1. Yes
70 ☐ 2. No
☐ 3. Not applicable

Obtaining salary increases and/or promotions?

☐ 1. Yes
71 ☐ 2. No
☐ 3. Not applicable

TRANSFER

If you enrolled at *another* college since leaving this college, please respond to the following questions, even if you are no longer a student.
Check one answer for each question.

N. Indicate the type of institution to which you transferred.

☐ 1. Another Maryland public community college
☐ 2. A public State college in Maryland
☐ 3. The University of Maryland
☐ 4. Maryland private four-year college or university
72 ☐ 5. A private two-year Maryland college
☐ 6. Maryland technical or commercial school
☐ 7. Out-of-state four-year public college or university
☐ 8. Out-of-state four-year private college or university
☐ 9. Other out-of-state college or university

O. What was your enrollment status when you enrolled in the institution indicated above.

☐ 1. Part-time
73 ☐ 2. Full-time

P. Indicate your overall grade point average at the transfer institution (based on a 4-point scale).

☐ 1. Less than 2.0
☐ 2. 2.0 - 2.4
74 ☐ 3. 2.5 - 2.9
☐ 4. 3.0 - 3.4
☐ 5. 3.5 and over

Q. To what extent was your curriculum program at this community college related to your major at the transfer institution?

☐ 1. Directly related
75 ☐ 2. Somewhat related
☐ 3. Not related

R. How satisfied were you with your preparation for transfer?

☐ 1. Extremely satisfied
76 ☐ 2. Satisfied
☐ 3. Unsatisfied

S. How many credit hours earned at this community college were not accepted at the transfer institution?

☐ 1. All credit hours accepted
☐ 2. Lost 1-3 credit hours
77 ☐ 3. Lost 4-6 credit hours
☐ 4. Lost 7-12 credit hours
☐ 5. Lost 13-20 credit hours
☐ 6. Lost more than 21 credit hours

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

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